

### **IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of a silica sol[[,]] wherein comprising reacting a fresh sol is~~reacted~~ with guanidine carbonate.
2. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 1, wherein the reaction with guanidine carbonate is ~~carried out~~ conducted in the presence of a base.
3. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 2, wherein the base is selected from the group consisting of sodium water glass, potassium water glass, potassium hydroxide, ~~and/or~~ sodium hydroxide and combinations thereof.
4. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as in any of claims 1 to 3~~ of claim 2, wherein the reaction is carried out at a reaction temperature and at a pH of from 8 to 12, the pH being measured at the reaction temperature.
5. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4~~ of claim 1, wherein ~~the preparation of the silica sol is effected~~ said process is conducted continuously.
6. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5~~ of claim 2, wherein the fresh sol and an aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate are fed continuously into a reactor, said reaction being conducted at,  
a pH of from 8 to 12, and  
a reaction temperature of from 25°C to 100°C, ~~being established and~~  
further wherein the an average residence time being is selected chosen so such that

the silica sol prepared has a BET surface area of  $\geq 100 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ .

7. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 6, wherein the ~~reaction is carried out at a~~ said reaction temperature ~~of~~ is from 80 to 100°C.

8. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in either of claim~~[[s]] 6 and 7, wherein an additional base is added into the reactor.

9. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claim~~[[s]] 6 to 8, wherein the reactor is a multistage reactor cascade having a first reactor, ~~the starting material preferably~~ said fresh sol and an aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate being fed to the first reactor.

10. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 9, wherein the pH, measured at the reaction temperature, is from 8 to 12 in all reactors of the multistage reactor cascade, and the reaction temperature in the first reactor is kept at from 25°C to 100°C, and the reaction temperature that in the each further reactor[[s]] is kept at from 60°C to 100°C.

11. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claim~~[[s]] 1 to 4, wherein the reaction is ~~effected~~ conducted batchwise, the guanidine carbonate being in the form of an aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate, at least said process comprising,

introducing initially a part of the fresh sol and the aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate ~~being initially introduced into a reactor, resulting in the formation of a remainder comprising said fresh sol and said aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate, said remainder not being initially introduced into said reactor,~~ and the

metering subsequently said remainder of the fresh sol and of the aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate being metered into the reaction mixture reactor, and

the holding said reactor at a temperature being established so such that an amount of solvent which corresponds to the amount of ~~metered~~ said remainder of the ~~fresh sol and of the aqueous solution of guanidine carbonate~~ evaporates from said reactor, thereby concentrating said silica sol.

12. (Currently Amended) The process ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 1 to 14,~~ wherein ~~concentration~~ further comprising concentrating said silica sol by a method selected from the group consisting of evaporation of the solvent ~~or and~~ by ultrafiltration, wherein the concentration step is effected conducted during or after the reaction of fresh sol with guanidine carbonate.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~[[A]] The silica sol[[,]] obtainable~~ prepared by [[a]] the process as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 1 to 12.

14. (Currently Amended) A silica sol having a BET surface area of from 100 to 1200 m<sup>2</sup>/g, ~~which contains~~ wherein said silica sol comprises from 0.05 to 15% by weight of guanidinium ions, based on the total weight of the silica sol.

15. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in of claim 13 or 14, which~~ has wherein said silica sol has a BET surface area of from 300 to 1200 m<sup>2</sup>/g.

16. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 14,~~ which wherein said silica sol has a pH of from 2 to 12.

17. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 14,~~ which wherein said silica sol is not stabilized with aluminum and ~~contains no~~ is free of amine.

18. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 14,~~ which wherein said silica sol has a molar SiO<sub>2</sub>/N ratio of from 2 to 20.

19. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 18~~ 14, which ~~wherein said silica sol~~ has a zeta potential of from -20 to -80 mV.

20. (Currently Amended) The silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 19~~ 14, which ~~wherein said silica sol~~ has an IR ~~band position of the Si-O stretching vibration~~ IR band position at a wave number of from 1113 cm<sup>-1</sup> to 1080 cm<sup>-1</sup>.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~The use of~~ A paper retention aid comprising the silica sol ~~as claimed in any of claim[[s]] 13 to 20 in paper retention~~ 14.